Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A system for microbially decontaminating a device, the system including:

a cabinet which defines an interior chamber for receiving the device;

spray nozzles, disposed within the chamber, for spraying a decontaminant fluid over an external surface of the device;

a rack ~~support~~ which supports the device, the rack hanging within the chamber; and

an activation system which displaces at least a portion of the rack ~~support~~ for changing points of contact between the device and the support.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A system ~~of claim 1, wherein~~ for microbially decontaminating a device, the system comprising:

a cabinet which defines an interior chamber for receiving the device;

spray nozzles, disposed within the chamber, for spraying a decontaminant fluid over an external surface of the device;

a support which supports the device within the chamber, the support ~~is~~ being supported adjacent an upper end for pivotal movement;

an activation system which displaces at least a portion of the support for changing points of contact between the device and the support, ~~and wherein~~ the

activation system ~~includes~~ including a means for periodically pivoting the support.

3. (Original) The system of claim 2, wherein the support includes a rack and further including a hanger in the chamber on which the rack is removably and pivotally hung.

4. (Original) The system of claim 2, wherein the support is supported on at least one hook on a wall of the chamber.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A system ~~of claim 1, wherein~~ for microbially decontaminating a device, the system comprising:

a cabinet which defines an interior chamber for receiving the device;

spray nozzles, disposed within the chamber, for spraying a decontaminant fluid over an external surface of the device;

a support which supports the device within the chamber; and

an activation system which displaces at least a portion of the support for changing points of contact between the device and the support, the activation system ~~includes~~ including a piston assembly.

6. (Original) The system of claim 5, further including:

a pneumatic system which provides motive power to the piston assembly.

7. (Original) The system of claim 5, wherein the piston assembly includes:

a piston body portion;

a shaft extending from the piston body portion and intermittently engaging the support when the piston assembly is activated; and

a piston cylinder in which the piston body portion is slidably received.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A system ~~of claim 1, wherein~~ for microbially decontaminating a device, the system comprising:

a cabinet which defines an interior chamber for receiving the device, the nozzles and the device ~~are~~ being positioned within the chamber such that the external surface of the device is impacted with a spray from at least one nozzle at an angle of no more than 45 degrees from perpendicular to the external surface;

a support which supports the device within the chamber;

spray nozzles, disposed within the chamber, for spraying a decontaminant fluid over an external surface of the device;

an activation system which changes points of contact between the device and the support.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A system ~~of claim 1, wherein~~ for microbially decontaminating a device with flexible portions, the system comprising:

a cabinet which defines an interior chamber for receiving the device;

spray nozzles, disposed within the chamber, for spraying a decontaminant fluid over the device;

a support which supports the device within the chamber, the support ~~includes~~ including pegs which position the device such that the flexible portions of the device are bent into an arc with a minimum radius of no less than 15 centimeters; and

an activation system which displaces at least a portion of the support changing points of contact between the device and the support.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~The~~ A system ~~of claim 1, further including~~ for microbially decontaminating a device, the system comprising:

a chamber for receiving the device;

spray nozzles, disposed within the chamber, for spraying a decontaminant fluid over an external surface of the device;

a support which supports the device within the chamber;

an activation system which displaces at least a portion of the support for changing points of contact between the device and the support; and

a clip which releasably couples a tip portion of the device to one of the support and another portion of the device, to keep the tip portion securely positioned.

11. (Original) The system of claim 10, wherein the clip includes at least one upper finger and at least one lower finger, the fingers each contacting the device at a ridge to minimize contact between the clip and the device.

12. (Original) A system for cleaning and microbially decontaminating endoscopes, the system comprising:

a cabinet defining a vertically elongated chamber having rear and side walls and a front door;

spray nozzles mounted on at least the rear and side walls of the chamber for spraying liquid cleaning and microbially decontaminating solutions;

a hanger on the chamber rear wall;

a rack configured to support a coiled endoscope, the rack being pivotally and removably hung on the hanger; and

a reciprocating drive having a drive member extending from the chamber rear wall adjacent the rack such that as the drive member reciprocates it engages and pushes the rack to pivot on the hanger and disengages from the rack to permit the liquid cleaning and decontaminating solutions to contact engaging surfaces of the rack and the drive member.

13. (Original) A method of microbially decontaminating a device comprising:

(a) mounting the device on a support;

(b) spraying a microbial decontaminant solution over the device to microbially decontaminate the exterior surfaces of the device; and

(c) during at least step (b), agitating the support to change points of contact between the device and the support.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of agitating the support includes:

striking the support at intervals such that the support pivots around a pivot point.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the support is struck at least once every 10 seconds.

16. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of agitating the support includes:

at intervals of time, driving a piston between first and second positions such that a shaft connected with the piston strikes the support.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the step of driving the piston includes pneumatically driving the piston.

18. (Original) The method of claim 13, further including:

supporting the support in a chamber such that the support is free to pivot when agitated.

19. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of spraying a microbial decontaminant solution includes alternating spraying from different directions to change points of contact between the support and the device.

20. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein a first set of the spray nozzles sprays the decontaminant solution for a first period of time and then a second set of the spray nozzles sprays the decontaminant solution for a second period of time.

REMARKS

This amendment is responsive to the Office Action of March 17, 2004. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-20 are requested.

The Office Action

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) and (e) as being anticipated by Lin, et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,013,277.

Claims 2-11 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but were considered to be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 12-20 were allowed.

The References of Record

Lin, et al. discloses a lumen device reprocessor in which groups of the blades of a shutter **58** are closed alternately (col. 15, lines 40-48 and Fig. 3b).

The Claims Distinguish Patentably Over the References of Record

Claims 2, 5, 8, 9, and 10 have been placed in independent form. There being no references cited against these claims, it is submitted that claims 2-11 are now in condition for allowance.

Claim 1 has been amended to call for a rack which supports a device, the rack hanging within the chamber. Support for amendments to claim 1 are to be found in the specification, at page 17, lines 31-33. Lin, et al. makes no suggestion of hanging a rack in a chamber. Rather, Lin discloses a shutter **58**, which closes an opening **56** in a wall **52** of a chamber.

The applicants have found that by hanging a rack, it can be readily agitated by an activation system to change points of contact with the device.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 1 distinguishes over the reference of record.

Formal Drawings

Applicants request an indication of the acceptability of the formal drawings, filed April 9, 2001.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above, it is submitted that claims 1-20 (all claims) distinguish patentably over the references of record and meet all statutory requirements. An early allowance of all claims is requested.

In the event the Examiner considers personal contact advantageous to the disposition of this case(s), he is requested to telephone Thomas E. Kocovsky, Jr. at (216) 861-5582.

Respectfully submitted,

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